



# Department of Justice

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**FORMER SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT OF MATTEL, INC.**  
**PLEADS GUILTY TO CAUSING THE SUBMISSION OF FALSE STATEMENTS**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Assistant Attorney General Christopher A. Wray of the Criminal Division announced today that Fermin Cuza, the former Senior Vice President of International Trade and Government Relations for Mattel, Inc., pleaded guilty to one count of causing the submission of false statements to the Federal Election Commission (FEC).

Cuza, 57, of Palm Desert, California, pleaded guilty to the single count of violating 18 U.S.C. § 1001 before Judge R. Gary Klausner at U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, California.

Beginning in March 1997, Cuza began making campaign contributions to various California-based candidates for state and federal office. Many of these contributions were made through straw donors, or conduits, several of whom were Cuza family members or associates. Cuza then arranged for another company to invoice Mattel in the amount of the campaign contribution and any related expenses. Upon Mattel's payment of these invoices, Cuza was reimbursed for those contributions made in his name, or in the name of his family members or associates.

Under the Federal Election Campaign Act (FECA), the responsible officials of each federal political committee were required to file periodic reports with the FEC. In each report, the responsible official was required to state the contribution's true source and the date and amount of the contribution. Under the FECA, corporations were prohibited from making contributions or expenditures from their general treasury funds in connection with any election of any candidate for federal office. The FECA also prohibited the use of conduits, or straw donors, as a means of circumventing the prohibition against corporate contributions.

Between March 1997 and November 2000, Cuza admitted making \$102,214 in contributions to 31 separate federal campaign committees. In turn, the responsible official of each committee submitted reports to the FEC that falsely characterized the contributions as being funded by the individuals listed, when in fact, the contributions were funded through Mattel's general treasury funds. In his plea today, Cuza admitted causing the reporting official of one of those campaign committees to submit false reports to the FEC. Cuza, who entered into a conciliation agreement with the FEC, agreed to pay, and has since paid, a civil penalty in the amount of \$188,000.

The charge of causing the submission of false statements carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. Sentencing was set for July 11, 2005.

The case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The case is being prosecuted by Mary K. Butler and Natashia Tidwell of the Public Integrity Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, headed by Section Chief Noel Hillman.

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